

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2452
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DJR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY MASERU POUCH
AMEMBASSY MBABANE POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 GABORONE 1773

STADIS - LIMDIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR BC
SUBJ: HOW TO EARN THE DISAFFECTION OF FRIENDS AND ENHANCE
RELATIONS WITH ADVERSARIES

REF: (A) GABORONE 1689 (NOTAL), (B) GABORONE 1683 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC INSTABILITY
INHERENT IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN EQUATION HAVE PUSHED BOTSWANA
INTO A POSITION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND REAL INSECURITY. THE GOB
HAS SOUGHT MILITARY MATERIEL ASSISTANCE FROM THE US (AND THE
UK), BUT HAS BEEN MET WITH NEGATIVE TO LUKEWARM RESPONSES AT
BEST. WE HAVE BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING ON ECONOMIC AND REFUGEE
AID, BUT MANY OF THESE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN BESET BY DELAY AND
UNCERTAINTY. EFFORTS TO OBTAIN OPEN MORAL SUPPORT FROM THE WEST
HAVE BEEN UNPRODUCTIVE (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PRESIDENT KHAMA'S
RECENT OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UK). BOTSWANA'S POLITICAL AND
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ECONOMIC ORIENTATION HAS UNTIL NOW BEEN BASICALLY PRO-
WESTERN, OFTEN AT THE EXPENSE OF CREDIBILITY WITH HER THIRD
WORLD AND AFRICAN PEERS. BUT IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF INSECURITY,
FRUSTRATING UNRESPONSIVENESS FROM THE WEST, AND INCREASINGLY
ATTRACTIVE BLOC BLANDISHMENTS (IN TERMS OF MILITARY MATERIEL),
WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED OR OFFENDED IF BOTSWANA LOOKS
INCREASINGLY EASTWARD FOR SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SETTING. A NUMBER OF EVENTS AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, NON-EVENTS HAVE COINCIDED RECENTLY TO CREATE AN IRONIC SITUATION IN WHICH A COUNTRY CLOSELY PARALLELING OUR OWN IN POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORIENTATION FINDS ITSELF FACED WITH A DILEMMA IN WHICH THE ONLY APPARENT ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT LIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING IS FROM THE COMMUNIST BLOC, SPECIFICALLY THE CUBAN/SOVIET SOURCES. BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN ASKED BUT COULD NOT RESPOND TO GOB REQUESTS FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE, WE ARE NOT IN THE MORAL OR LOGICAL POSITION TO COUNSEL EFFECTIVELY AGAINST BOTSWANA'S TURNING IN THAT DIRECTION FOR HELP.

3. BOTSWANA IS UNIQUE AMONG FRONTLINE STATES IN BEING BORDERED BY THE THREE SOUTHERN AFRICAN TROUBLE SPOTS, I.E., NAMIBIA, RHODESIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM BLACK NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS TO ALLOW ITS TERRITORY TO BE USED NOT ONLY FOR INFILTRATION BY, BUT AS STAGING AREAS FOR, GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES DIRECTED AGAINST THE WHITE MINORITY REGIMES OF HER NEIGHBORS. DESPITE THIS, BOTSWANA HAS RETAINED HER NON-RACIAL, DEMOCRATIC, FREE-ENTERPRISE-ORIENTED AND POLITICALLY MODERATE (THAT IS PRO-WESTERN) SYSTEM AND ORIENTATION, DUE PRIMARILY TO TWO MAIN FACTORS:

A) HISTORIC AND TRADITIONAL TIES WITH THE WEST, PARTICULARLY
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WITH THE UK, TOWARD WHICH MOST OF THE OLDER LEADERS AND MANY OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION STILL LOOK FOR PHILOSOPHICAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT; AND

B) OVERWHELMINGLY PREDOMINANT ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON TRADE AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, A DISTASTEFUL BUT OMNIPRESENT FACT OF LIFE. DESPITE A DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY WITH BLACK AFRICAN BROTHERS, BOTSWANA HAS ACTIVELY AND PUBLICLY SUPPORTED THE WESTERN INITIATIVES ON RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA (AS WELL AS US POSITIONS ON KEY ISSUES IN NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS, E.G., PUERTO RICO). THESE STANCES HAVE REQUIRED CONSIDERABLE COURAGE AND HAVE COST BOTSWANA A GOOD DEAL IN TRUST AND CONFIDENCE FROM THE NON-ALIGNED, OAU AND EVEN HER FRONTLINE COLLEAGUES.

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2453

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ESSALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY MASERU POUCH

AMEMBASSY MBABANE POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 GABORONE 1773

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4. POLITICAL/SECURITY SITUATION. THIS BASICALLY PRO-WESTERN ORIENTATION HAS BEEN PROGRESSIVELY WEAKENED, HOWEVER, BY (A) THE APPARENT STAGNATION OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS IN RHODESIA AND THE WESTERN FIRVE SETTLEMENT EFFORTS IN NAMIBIA; (B) THE SUDDEN INCREASE IN THE FLOW OF ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEES TO A MAGNITUDE WHICH THREATENS TO ENGULF GOB RESOURCES; (B) AN UNSTABLE SECURITY SITUATION ALONG BOTSWANA'S RHODESIAN BORDER (WHICH WAS SERIOUSLY EXACERBATED BY THE LATE FEBRUARY AMBUSH OF A BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE PATROL IN WHICH 17 BATSWANA WERE KILLED BY RHODESIAN FORCES); (D) THE RESULTING PUBLIC DEMAND FOR STRENGTHENED GOB SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITY; AND (E) BY THE INCREASED PRESSURES FROM AFRICAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS AIMED AT CREATING AMORE MILITANT ATTITUDE AND DEVELOPING BASES IN BOTSWANA FOR USE IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST NEIGHBORING WHITE REGIMES.

5. BOTSWANA'S FIRST INSTINCT WAS TO TURN TO WESTERN SOURCES

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FOR MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT. IN BOTSWANA'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY INSECURE AND MILITARILY INDEFENSIBLE POSITION, GOB FIRST SOUGHT MILITARY MATERIEL FROM THE UK AND THE USG. IT INEVITABLY RECEIVED FIRMLY NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE OR FOREIGN MILITARY SALES CREDITS, AND ONLY LUKEWARM ENCOURAGEMENT FOR COMMERCIAL PURCHASES OF ARMS. IN LIEU OF ARMS TRANSFERS TO BOTSWANA, THE USG HAS PROPOSED THAT SOME

\$9 MILLION OF FY 1978 AID FUNDS, FORMERLY EARMARKED FOR THE RAILWAY PROJECT BUT WHICH WOULD GO UNUSED, IF RESERVED FOR THAT PURPOSE, BE RECHANNELED INTO A PROGRAM GRANT WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE GOB TO USE THOSE FUNDS TO OFFSET MONIES WHICH MIGHT BE SPENT TOWARD MILITARY PURCHASES. WHILE WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OR OPPOSITION IN WASHINGTON WITH THIS CONCEPT, THE RECORD TO DATE IS LACK OF APPROVAL (APPARENTLY DUE TO PROCEDURAL DELAYS AND/OR REWRITING) WITH THE NET RESULT THAT WE ARE STILL UNABLE TO CONFIRM TO THE GOB THAT THEY WILL IN FACT RECEIVE THIS GRANT. IF, DESPITE ITS PATIENCE AND CONSTANT EFFORTS, THE GOB IS UNABLE TO OBTAIN TANGIBLE RESULTS FROM THE WEST, THEY ARE ASKING (REFTELS) HOW THEY CAN BE FAULTED IF, IN THEIR UNCERTAIN AND INCREASINGLY UNTENABLE POSITION, THEY TURN TO THE EAST? AS PRESIDENT KHAMA SAID (ON TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS) RECENTLY: "...WE WOULD BE THE LAST NATION (IN SOUTHERN AFRICA) TO CHALLENGE RHODESIA OR ANY OF OUR NEIGHBORS ON THE BATTLEFIELD." (BUT)"THE TIME IS PAST WHEN WE COULD RELY ON OUR WEAKNESS TO BE OUR STRENGTH."

6. ECONOMIC/AID ASSISTANCE. WHILE NOT AS CRITICAL TO THE PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE ARISING FROM BOTSWANA'S MILITARY AND ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY, THE AURA OF UNCERTAINTY AND UNRELIABILITY CONCERNING WESTERN INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED (A) BY OUR INABILITY, BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONALLY-IMPOSED DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS, TO ASSIST GOB IN ITS CONTINGENCY PLANNING TO MAINTAIN RHODESIAN RAILWAY

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LIFELINE; (B) BY OUR RELUCTANCE IN GENERAL TO UNDERTAKE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS; AND

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2454

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(C) BY OUR INFLEXIBILITY IN HELPING MEET PRIORITY NEEDS, E.G., REFUGEE RELIEF. DESPITE BOTSWANA'S EXCELLENT RECORD FOR CAREFUL PLANNING, ABSENCE OF CORRUPTION AND MODEST REQUESTS, THE EVIDENCE IS THAT AID WASHINGTON APPROACHES THE GOB IN THE SAME METHODICAL, STEP-BY-STEP MANNER AS COUNTRIES WITH LESS PRESSING NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND IS SEEKING TO JUSTIFY ITS PROGRAMS USING NORMAL AID ECONOMIC CRITERIA, RATHER THAN EXPEDITE ASSISTANCE IN THE LIGHT OF EXTRAORDINARY POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS. ON THE PLUS SIDE OF THE LEDGER, THE USG HAS MAINTAINED SOME FEELINGS OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR RESPONSIVENESS AND GOODWILL BY (A) CONTRIBUTING US\$6 MILLION THROUGH THE UNHCR FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA; AND (B) THE SPECIAL SELF-HELP PROGRAM, WHICH HAS BROUGHT US BENEFITS OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO ITS EXTREMELY MODEST COST. (IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT BOTH THESE VERY POSITIVE PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE NORMAL AID CHANNELS--ONE THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, AND THE OTHER A SERIES OF ALMOST CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISCULE PROJECTS USING AID FUNDS BUT ADMINISTERED BY STATE.) WHILE THESE SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS HAVE BEEN GOING FORWARD, THE POSITIVE IMAGE THUS CREATED HAS BEEN ERODED AND TARNISHED BY THE USG'S SLUGGISHNESS, UNRESPONSIVENESS AND EVEN NEGATIVISM TOWARD MANY CONVENTIONAL PROJECTS.

7. PSYCHOLOGICAL. THE ABOVE MATERIAL SITUATION NOTWITHSTANDING, BY REENFORCING AND VINDICATING BOTSWANA'S NATURAL INCLINATION TOWARD WESTERN PHILOSOPHIC AND MORAL SYSTEMS, THE US AND HER WESTERN ALLIES STILL RETAIN A FOOTHOLD IN THE COUNTRY WHICH IS AN ALMOST UNIQUE STANDARD BEARER OF LIBERAL WESTERN VALUES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. TO THEIR CREDIT, THE BRITISH HAVE RECENTLY EXTENDED AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO PRESIDENT KHAMA WITH FULL HONORS INCLUDING PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE ROYAL FAMILY. THE USG RECORD, UNFORTUNATELY, HAS FALLEN FAR SHORT ALTHOUGH AS THIS IS WRITTEN THERE HAVE BEEN EFFORTS TO RETRIEVE SOME BENEFITS FROM THE SITUATION RESULTING FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY'S DECISION TO CONFER AN HONORARY DEGREE ON PRESIDENT KHAMA. THIS OCCASION OFFERED

US GRATUITOUSLY AN OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR HIM. INSTEAD, WE
TEMPORIZED TO THE POINT WHERE PRESIDENT KHAMA WAS REDUCED IN
DESPERATION TO RESCIND HIS REQUEST. LESS DAMAGING TO BOTSWANA'S
CONFIDENCE IN USG SUPPORT, BUT NONETHELESS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR,
IS OUR INACTION ON ANY FORM OF POSITIVE RECOGNITION (THUS FAR
SUGGESTED) OF BOTSWANA'S EXEMPLARY STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS.
SEEKING TO USE IN PART THE SECTION 116E FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY
CONGRESS TO HELP INSTITUTIONALIZE RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY AND
HUMAN RIGHTS OR AT LEAST HALT THIS FURTHER EROSION, WE HAVE
PROPOSED INTER ALIA: THE DONATION OF MOTION PICTURE PROJECTORS
TO FACILITATE THE EXHIBITION OF ICA FILMS SHOWING THE US
PLURAL SOCIETY AND NON-RACIAL SPORTS; THE PROVISION OF UNIVERSITY
(UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE) SCHOLARSHIPS TO ASSIST THOSE YOUNG
BOTSWANA REPEAT BOTSWANA HOPING TO STUDY IN THE US (FINANCING OF
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THE SCHOLARSHIPS NEED NOT BE UNDER 116E, OF COURSE); AND THE
VISIT OF A HIGH-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL TO BOTSWANA.
OUR AIM IS TO ACCORD WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION TO PRESIDENT
KHAMA'S COURAGEOUS AND OFTEN LONELY STAND AS AN AFRICAN HEAD
OF STATE WHO, BY WORD AND EXAMPLE, IS AN OUTSTANDING CHAMPION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THESE IDEAS, WHICH ARE GEARED DIRECTLY TO
ACHIEVEMENT OF AGREED NATIONAL OBJECTIVES, HAVE BEEN MET WITH
EITHER NEGATIVE OR NO RESPONSES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 4 OF 4 GABORONE 1773

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8. CONCLUSION. WHAT WE ARE LEFT WITH, THEN, IS A SITUATION IN WHICH THE ATMOSPHERE OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY UNCERTAINTY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO THE POINT WHERE, IN LIGHT OF THE WEST'S INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE THE POSITIVE RESPONSES (I.E., ACTION) SO DESPERATELY DESIRED BY THE GOB, IT FINDS ITSELF WITH LITTLE RECOURSE BUT TO TURN FOR SUPPORT TO MOST UNWORTHY SOURCES, THE CUBANS, SOVIETS OR CHINESE. AS EVIDENCE OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE DETERIORATION WITH THE WEST AND REORIENTATION TOWARD THE EAST HAS ALREADY PROCEEDED, WE HAVE A CURRENT RUMOR GOING THE ROUNDS (DESPITE OFFICIAL DENIAL) THAT PRESIDENT KHAMA HAS BEEN INVITED TO PAY A STATE VISIT TO CUBA FOLLOWING HIS ATTENDANCE AT THE KHARTOUM OAU MEETING. WHETHER OR NOT THIS RUMOR IS WELL-FOUNDED, WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT IS THAT THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, I.E., ACTIONS OF THE US AND THE WEST, IS SUCH THAT IT CAN ENJOY WIDESPREAD CIRCULATION AND CREDENCE. THE CUBANS HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH BOTSWANA AT THE (SO FAR NON-RESIDENT) AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL;
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THEIR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA HAVE EARNED THEM A REPUTATION DISPROPORTIONATE TO THEIR REAL POWER; AND THE SOVIETS AND THEY ARE VERY EVIDENTLY WILLING TO FILL THE BREACH RESULTING FROM WESTERN PARALYSIS OR UNWILLINGNESS IN PROVIDING SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO BOTSWANA. WHILE A FEW MONTHS AGO THE PROSPECT OF PRESIDENT KHAMA'S PAYING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO CUBA OR ACCEPTING CUBAN OR SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN VIEWED AS MOST UNLIKELY, IT IS NOW WELL WITHIN POSSIBILITY AND SEEN AS SUCH IN BOTH PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL CIRCLES.

7. ACTIONS REQUESTED: THAT WE BEGIN NOW TO MINIMIZE, AND REVERSE, THE EROSION OF OUR POSITION IN BOTSWANA AND THE ANOMIC DRIFT TOWARD RELIANCE ON BLOC SOURCES OF SUPPORT, BY:

A) ASSURING THAT THE FY 78 PROGRAM GRANT FOR BOTSWANA IS APPROVED PROMPTLY AND THE GOB SO NOTIFIED;

B) PROGRAMMING A MINIMUM OF 20 UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS EACH YEAR FOR BATSWANA STUDENTS;

C) ARRANGING THE VISIT TO BOTSWANA OF A TOP US ADMINISTRATION FIGURE, ONE WHO IS WELL ENOUGH KNOWN HERE TO BE A CONVINCING SYMBOL OF OUR UNDERSRITING OR PRESIDENT KHAMA'S POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS PHILOSOPHIES;

D) PROVIDING EARLY AND POSITIVE RESPONSES TO GOB INITIATIVES
ON THE TRANS-KALAHARI ROAD AND WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS,
BOTH OF WHICH ARE GIVEN HIGH AND URGENT PRIORITY BY THE GOB;
AND

E) INCREASING THE FY 78 SSH FUNDS FOR BOTSWANA BY \$50,000,
AS REQUESTED IN GABORONE 1642, TO PERMIT US TO BE RESPONSIVE
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TO DESERVING PROJECTS WHICH OTHERWISE MIGHT BE DELAYED DUE TO
INADEQUATE FUNDING.
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